

## CAUCASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

Their primary thought was to get rid of the Russian administration, police, and army — the hated instruments of oppression. Local committees of native nationalists, ambitious to assume authority, were created without much delay in the Caucasus and Transcaucasia. Similar developments took place in Transcaspia and Turkestan. The emirs of Bukhara and Khiva also manifested their determination to free themselves from the Russian yoke. An atmosphere of hopeful expectation and optimism developed everywhere.<sup>1</sup> Grand Duke Nicolas, Viceroy of the Caucasus, was expelled from Tiflis two days after the revolution, on the nineteenth of March. The Russian Governor-General of Turkestan had to leave Tashkent hurriedly during the same week. The old tsarist bureaucracy was quickly replaced by executive committees in which such diverse elements as native nationalists, Social Democrats, Russian Socialist Revolutionaries, and nonparty Russian colonists and Cossacks were represented.

### THE EMANCIPATION OF TRANSCAUCASIA

In the areas north and south of the Caucasus Range the dominant elements in these executive committees were native Social Democrats motivated as much by a desire for progressive social change as by purely nationalistic feelings. They belonged mostly to the Menshevik wing of the Social Democratic Party and were opposed to the extreme Communist doctrines of the Bolshevik wing. These Caucasian nationalists decided in most cases to remain faithful to Russia, provided Russia were to liberalize her minorities policy. They knew that the attitude of the Provisional Government was to delay the solution until the meeting of the first Constituent

Assembly.

Besides, the Provisional Government had made a gesture of good will toward the Caucasus by appointing the Duma deputy, Akaky Chenkeli, a Georgian Social Democrat and patriot, as High Commissioner for Transcaucasia (including Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia) in the place of the expelled Viceroy. Another evidence of good will was the inclusion of the Georgian Iraklii Tseretelli, formerly Chairman of the Social Democrats in the Second Duma, as Minister of

a more detailed description of events in Tiflis immediately after the March Revolution, see M. Philips Price, *War and Revolution in Asiatic Russia* (New York, 1918), pp. 270 ff.